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Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Leslye Krutko

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF 2007 SAN JOSÉ
HOMELESS CENSUS & SURVEY

DATE: June 20, 2007

Approved

Date

6/21/07

INFORMATION

Every two years, the City of San José conducts a point-in-time count and survey of its homeless population. During the early morning hours of January 29th and 30th, the City of San José, in conjunction with the County of Santa Clara and consultant Applied Survey Research (ASR) conducted the 2007 Santa Clara County Homeless Count. The count included reports from City shelters on their occupancy and the deployment of volunteers throughout the City to count people sleeping on the streets, parks, vehicles, or in encampments. Based on the findings of both the countywide homeless count and survey, ASR produced a report providing qualitative and quantitative information on the County's homeless population.

In order to get a better understanding of the conditions and needs of the City's homeless population, as well as the changes in the population since the last count, which was completed in 2004, the Housing Department contracted with ASR to canvass all 186 of San José's census tracts during the count and replicate the previous survey efforts. This year, 716 one-on-one interviews were conducted with homeless residents in San José. ASR prepared a second report specifically for the City of San José based on the count and survey results of just those homeless individuals found within the City's boundaries.

According to ASR, the 2007 homeless survey is not a scientifically random survey of all homeless experiences. However, because of the large number of surveys that were collected, the results can be used to inform the community about homelessness in San José.

The following provides highlights of the census and survey findings for San José:

NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE

According to the point-in-time counts, there are a total of 4,309 homeless persons living in San Jose, just over 600 persons less, or an approximately 12% decrease, than the number of homeless persons residing in San José in 2005. Based on a formula that takes into account the point-in-time count, as well as the phenomenon that people will cycle in and out of homelessness, an estimated 11,264 individuals in San José will be homeless at some point during the year. Because the County's previous homeless census and survey used a different methodology for determining the annual estimate and did not break the estimate down by jurisdiction, we are not

able to assess whether there has been a change in the annual number of persons homeless in San José.

WHERE THE HOMELESS LIVE

The majority of the homeless persons counted in San José were unsheltered (76%), meaning they were living on the streets, in parks, vehicles, or encampments and not in shelters. In 2004, only 63% of the City's homeless population was unsheltered. The reduction in the number of homeless residents in San José can be found in those persons staying in shelters. This year, San José had 159 more unsheltered homeless persons than the previous count and 760 fewer sheltered homeless persons.

| Setting | 2004 | 2007 | Difference (2007-2004) |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Unsheltered | 3,101 | 3,260 | 159 |
| Sheltered | 1,809 | 1,049 | -760 |
| Total | 4,910 | 4,309 | 601 |

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

The majority of San José's unhoused residents are individuals (88%), while the remaining 12% are living in families. The chart below summarizes the living situation, by household type, of San José's homeless population.

| Setting | Individuals | Persons in Families | Total Persons | Percentage of Total |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Unsheltered | 3,087 | 173 | 3,260 | 75.7% |
| In Emergency Shelters | 409 | 178 | 587 | 13.6% |
| In Transitional Housing | 298 | 164 | 462 | 10.7% |
| Total | 3,794 | 515 | 4,309 | 100% |

LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS

The length of homelessness represented by survey respondents pointed to a mix of new homeless episodes and long episodes of being unhoused. Over one-quarter of the respondents (29%) had been homeless for 2-6 months, 13% had been homeless for 30 days or less, and 12% had been homeless for one to two years. Almost one-third (30%) of the survey respondents had been homeless for two years or longer, while 21% had been homeless for more than three years. Nationally, 30% of the homeless population has been homeless for two years or longer.

NUMBER OF CHRONICALLY HOMELESS

Lastly, an important finding from the survey is the portion of the respondents who can be classified as *chronically homeless*. A chronically homeless person is an individual with a disabling condition who has been continually homeless for one year or more, or has experienced four or more episodes of homelessness within the past three years. For this purpose, a disabling

condition can be defined as a physical or mental disability (such as mental illness or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), alcohol or drug addiction, HIV/AIDS, chronic health conditions or a developmental disability. Based on the criteria outlined above, approximately twenty-eight percent of the respondents can be considered chronically homeless. This figure is higher than the national figure of twenty-three percent reported in 2007 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress.

SUMMARY

San José has worked hard to reduce the number of persons in the community who are living without a home. However, much work lays ahead to meet the City's goal of eliminating chronic homelessness.

In order to better understand the changes in the City's homeless population and assess the efficacy of its programs, the Housing Department will continue to work with ASR to compare the current year's findings with those from 2004. Additionally, the Housing Department will carefully review and analyze the survey results to better understand the needs of the City's homeless population, and subsequently develop, maintain, or alter its homeless programs based on these needs.



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